

Arizona Career and Technical Education Accountability System

Table of Contents

Why Do We Need An Accountability System?	1
What Principles Guide the Program Performance Assessment System?	1
How is Program Performance Evaluated?	2
What is the Purpose of the Local Program Assessment Guide?	2
What Are the Benefits of Using the Local Program Assessment Guide?	2
What are the Components of the Local Program Assessment Guide?	3
Where Do We Begin?.....	4
How Can Continuous Program Improvement be Sustained?	5
What To Consider In Developing a Local Program Continuous Accountability Plan?	6
Resources	8
Glossary	9
Graphic of the 6 Step Cycle.....	11
Program Practices Composite Analysis Template.....	12
Flowchart of Local Program Assessment Activities	14
Attachment	
Local Program Assessment Guide	

ARIZONA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Why Do We Need An Accountability System?

Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (Perkins IV) emphasizes accountability and the need for a statewide system of accountability based on reliable and valid program performance data. The federal legislation requires state and local eligible recipients to annually evaluate and assess the performance of their vocational programs. Having a statewide accountability system enables the State and local school districts to do the following:

- Take charge of assessing their own performance;
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in their systems;
- Produce evidence of what improvement strategies are/are not working; and
- Disseminate results to better inform the public about student learning and program performance.

What Principles Guide the Program Performance Assessment System?

Systems Thinking

- Understand where and how your work contributes to the organization.
- Know how to use data effectively, as it enhances your understanding of the interactions between program curriculum and student interaction.
- Understand key practices that affect performance, as this is essential to the program's continuous improvement.

Management by Data

- Choices and decisions must be based on valid and reliable data.
- Effective improvement occurs with the inclusion of a program assessment strategy.
- Assessment of current performance relies on objective criteria to determine what is going on and decide what improvements to make.
- Outcomes must be related to practices and inputs in order to effectively use performance data.
- Access to reliable data early in the teaching and learning process can minimize problems.

Continuous Improvement

- A stabilized, well-defined system, as well as, an assessment strategy is essential before setting improvement goals.
- Emphasis of effective design of programs, curricula and learning environment both for the student and faculty should be key areas for improvement.

How is Program Performance Evaluated?

The evaluation is conducted to determine if the program has reached its goals and assesses the program status within the educational organization. Two types of evaluation are used to provide information for continuous program improvement:

- Formative evaluation – provides information for program revision and refinement
- Summative evaluation – determines if the program has successfully met the goals that were established when the program was started

What Is The Purpose of the Local Program Assessment Guide?

The Arizona Department of Education staff will use the Local Program Assessment Guide (LPAG) in its evaluation of vocational programs with low performance results. The LPAG may be used as a formative or summative evaluation tool by school districts to guide inquiry and examination of current practices. The intended outcomes of a program assessment are to evaluate program success, improve learning and instruction, and certify individual student mastery.

Evaluate Program Success

- Give a clear picture of the system the program is in.
- Gather information that allows the district to predict performance.
- Improve the system in a disciplined and systematic way.

Improve Learning and Instruction

- Evaluate the district's performance in each program area and guide future planning.
- Improve the district's performance, practices and capabilities.

Certify Student Mastery

- Document student mastery of general and specific skills and abilities essential for employment.
- Enhance student transition from school to career

What Are The Benefits of Using The Local Program Assessment Guide?

Completing the LPAG will help a school district determine:

- How clearly aligned and widely applied the variety of choices are in the design and delivery of program instruction and learning.
- Whether the selected choices are contributing to or achieving performance targets.

Carl Perkins IV requires the State to conduct an annual program assessment of the vocational and technical activities of each eligible recipient receiving funds under Perkins IV. Results of the assessment are used to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of the program and provide information to design, develop and implement a local program improvement plan. In Arizona

this plan is referred to as a Continuous Accountability Plan (CAP) [Perkins IV - Sec. 123 Improvement Plans].

In promoting Perkins IV continuous improvement mandate [Perkins IV - Sec. 113 Accountability], Arizona's State Plan requires districts to conduct an annual program performance evaluation of their vocational technical programs to determine the progress in achieving the state-adjusted levels of performance. Arizona's emphasis is on continuous program improvement that involves using historical performance data to set future performance goals, monitoring progress toward goal achievement and for regular evaluation of local programs.

Should a program not meet performance measures OR not make substantial progress toward meeting the performance measures, the Arizona Department of Education is required to conduct an evaluation of the program. The Local Program Assessment Guide (LPAG) will be used as the basis for the Department of Education's evaluation.

What Are The Components of the Local Program Assessment Guide?

Pillars

Five elements—called pillars—have been identified for examination. Each pillar represents elements included in national education reform models for program improvement.

Items

Each pillar is organized into two to six related topics identified as *Items*. The *Items* focus the examination on a particular aspect of a Pillar. Through this focused examination, investigations can be made and a systemic analysis of behavioral practices achieved.

Guiding Questions

Guiding Questions have been developed for each *Item*. *Guiding Questions* are a checklist for characteristics of quality programs. Each question includes a five-point scale representing a continuum of improvement practices. The teacher/director/local evaluation team member will indicate on the scale his/her assessment of the current practice and/or extent of the practice. Using this data for analysis of each continuum helps establish priorities and promotes goal setting for improved program performance.

Together, the *Items*, *Guiding Questions* and continuum scale form the framework for a diagnostic system for:

- Determining gaps in current approach,
- Analyzing current deployment and student results,
- Encouraging cycles of learning and innovation, and
- Providing valid information to drive change.

The *Items* and *Guiding Questions* may also prompt additional questions from the evaluator or evaluation team to research deeper into the system.

The five pillars identified for program assessment and their descriptions follow:

Program Assessment, Information and Analysis

- Examination of the programs' performance measurement system: gauges understanding, aligning and improving program performance at all levels and all parts of the organization

Strategic Planning

- Examination of the district/school/programs' strategy development process including program objectives, action plans and resource allocation
- Examination of the deployment of the plans
- Examination of how student performance is tracked

Staff Development

- Examination of how the district/school/department enables faculty to develop and utilize their full potentials in alignment with the organization's goals and objectives
- Examination of the efforts to build and maintain a supportive work environment that is conducive to promoting excellence in faculty performance
- Examination of resource alignment that supports knowledge of content discipline, student learning styles and assessment methods

Contextual and Experiential Learning

- Examination of the extent to which students participate in work-based and school-based instruction, including knowledge and skills required for pursuing careers via continuing education or entrance into the workplace
- Examination that the workplace environment serves as a basis to the in-school curricula

Rigorous Career Technical Education and Academic Studies

- Examination of how academic and career and technical education curricula incorporate a purposely developed and articulated program of studies
- Examination of curriculum design to ensure high levels of achievement for all students' personal growth, including citizenship development, preparation for work or higher education and emphasizing the need of life-long learning to remain a productive, responsible member of society.

Where Do We Begin?

First—

- ✓ Adopt the vision of using data for improvement purposes. Consider what kinds of data are useful. The data you collect should provide relevant information important to the school, district, state and program's mission and goals.

- ✓ Before assembling an improvement team, you must decide the level at which you want to analyze.

Possible choices include:

- Requesting that an individual teacher evaluate his/her program;

- Inviting a cadre of teachers from the same school to evaluate their program;
- Gathering a cadre of district-wide teachers to evaluate the program; and/or
- Assembling a local evaluation team to evaluate a program.

The LPAG is a suitable tool for each choice. It can be completed for all levels of analysis, and the information summarized to create a composite picture of program practices. The process encourages you to add data about other key education outcomes, practices and inputs which in your professional experience are important. Such data should include your recent Performance Measures results and benchmarks important to your district/school/program.

- ✓ Assemble the program improvement team(s). Team members should represent groups responsible for implementing improvement efforts and/or have an investment in the results of the program's performance. Perkins IV specifies populations members of the annual evaluation team will represent, but not be limited to at least one representative from each of the following groups:
 - ▶ Parents of currently enrolled students or recent graduates;
 - ▶ Currently enrolled student or recent graduate;
 - ▶ Career and technical education teacher from the program area
 - ▶ Member from the business and industry that the program reflects
 - ▶ Labor organizations
 - ▶ Representative of special populations
 - ▶ Other interested individuals such as government, nonprofit youth service providers or workforce development representatives
- ✓ Designate a local evaluation coordinator. The local evaluation coordinator will lead the team in implementing the following evaluation procedures:
 - Review data on each performance measure for every program.
 - Review summary data from the Local Program Assessment Guide.
 - Select and prioritize program improvement recommendations and strategies.
 - Identify the needed resources to support the short-term and longer-term improvement activities.
 - Develop a written program Continuous Accountability Plan (CAP).
 - Implement the CAP.
 - Conduct regular periodic evaluations of progress toward performance goals.

How Can Continuous Program Improvement Be Sustained?

To sustain continuous program improvement, the following proven six-step process can implement and sustain continuous program improvement:

1. Have a clear understanding of the State goals and align the local program goals to them. This alignment of local and state goals will then drive the performance measures system. Data collection must focus on relevant information in relation to the identified goals. This information will be used to monitor performance and diagnose progress in meeting the desired goals.

2. Identify related instructional and learning outcomes, practices and inputs. This step will help in examining the relationship between practices, inputs and outcomes. Most schools track outcomes without collecting data on related practices and inputs, which limits their abilities to explain the resulting outcomes.
3. Determine data sources and indicators that measure district performance on the goals. Developing new data sources is an expensive endeavor, so determine already exists. To evaluate the quality of the performance measurement system, examine the data sources using the following six criteria:
 - ▶ Validity
 - ▶ Reliability
 - ▶ Fairness
 - ▶ Cost effectiveness
 - ▶ System focused
 - ▶ Management utility
4. Examine the data to improve your understanding of the program's performance. Data analysis does not need to involve complex statistics, but should include concrete examples.
5. Set performance targets. These targets are a means for measuring progress if they are specific and measurable. Setting targets involves:
 - Knowing how the program is currently performing—
Ask: Where does the data come from?
How is the data compiled? and
How does the data translate into concrete examples of student performance?
 - Gathering comparative information from external sources to assure target is externally valid
 - Identifying your level of satisfaction with your current performance

Once targets are set, develop a plan to achieve them by developing and using program improvement strategies.

6. A dynamic system should continues to produce useful information as circumstances change at the district. Progress toward performance targets should be measured after baseline district performance data have been established. Collect, examine and report data on a determined time line.
 - Set priorities for on-going data collection efforts that includes the frequency of data collection and analysis.
 - Determine the method for data storage. and
 - Assign roles and responsibilities for key data collection tasks.

By following systematic collection processes, performance data will be produced that can be communicated to program stakeholders on a regular basis. Revisit the six steps on a regular

basis, to ensure that the data collection process continues to produce useful and relevant information.

What To Consider In Developing A Local Program Continuous Accountability Plan?

In contrast to previous years, the program's Continuous Accountability Plan (CAP) is not a single document. Instead the CAP is the cumulative *local process* of evaluating program performance and planning for improvement. The new Arizona accountability system does not prescribe either the method or sequence of local evaluation activities. The actual design of the local process belongs at the local level. However, in general the State expects the local process will involve:

- evaluating local performance using the district's Performance Measures reports;
- assessing local practices within the context of the larger organization (the Local Program Assessment Guide is one example of how this can be done at the local level);
- prioritizing opportunities for program improvement;
- planning for the implementation of improvement activities;
- implementing the improvements and
- monitoring results and adjusting for changes in improvement

Within the context of the new Arizona Accountability system, a *successful* local process will be characterized by:

- using both Performance Measures reports and the local assessment results to create a composite description of the program's performance and practices;
- linking the program's composite description to the larger organization and considering how each influences the other;
- prioritizing the opportunities for improvement in light of these systemic influences;
- turning the improvement opportunities into concrete activities that are:
 - manageable in size, scope and time,
 - measurable, and
 - can be monitored;
- documenting the-planned improvement activities, who has the responsibility for their implementation, how they will be measured for effectiveness, and who and when will they be monitored.

Local Evaluation Team members contribute to the local process when they:

- identify and bring people with a stake in the program's performance into the local evaluation process;
- determine how everyone will understand the importance of achieving improvement and to
- recognize and share successful program improvements.

In this way, a successful local evaluation process contributes to Arizona's accountability system by using performance data to set performance goals, monitors progress toward goal achievement, and establishes a cycle for local program evaluation and continuous improvement.

*Begin with the end clearly in mind – that is--
measurable, continuous program improvements guarantee measurable continuous student
achievement.*

RESOURCES

GLOSSARY

ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT PLAN

A plan based upon the findings of an external assessment directed by ADE of the Career and Technical Education program which failed to meet the expected state levels of performance.

BENCHMARK

A criterion by which something can be measured or judged.

CONTINUOUS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

A local plan resulting from the annual evaluation of the career and technical education program. The plan identifies activities, services, and functions to be carried out to develop, support, and improve the quality of the career and technical education program to achieve the state adjusted levels of performance.

LOCAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT GUIDE

The assessment instrument used by ADE to evaluate district career and technical education programs that do not achieve the state adjusted levels of performance. The guide is intended to assist in the development of the Accountability Assessment Plan.

PROCESSES

A systematic sequence of action used that combine resources to produce an output.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The systematic investigation of the worth or merit of a program.

SCHOOL INPUTS

Resources at the use of the district have, including students, staff, community support, physical plant, equipment and budget. Since many resources are relatively fixed, they are likely to influence the set of practices that are appropriate and the outcomes that are achievable in the short term.

SCHOOL PRACTICES

Strategies adopted to achieve or improve your targeted student outcomes, including curriculum, instruction, assessment methods and supporting structures.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

What you want students to know, think, believe, value, achieve or be able to do—the ultimate objective of schooling.

STAKEHOLDER(S)

A person or persons who have an investment in the successful outcomes of the program. Perkins IV identifies such members as but not limited to at least one representative from each of the following groups:

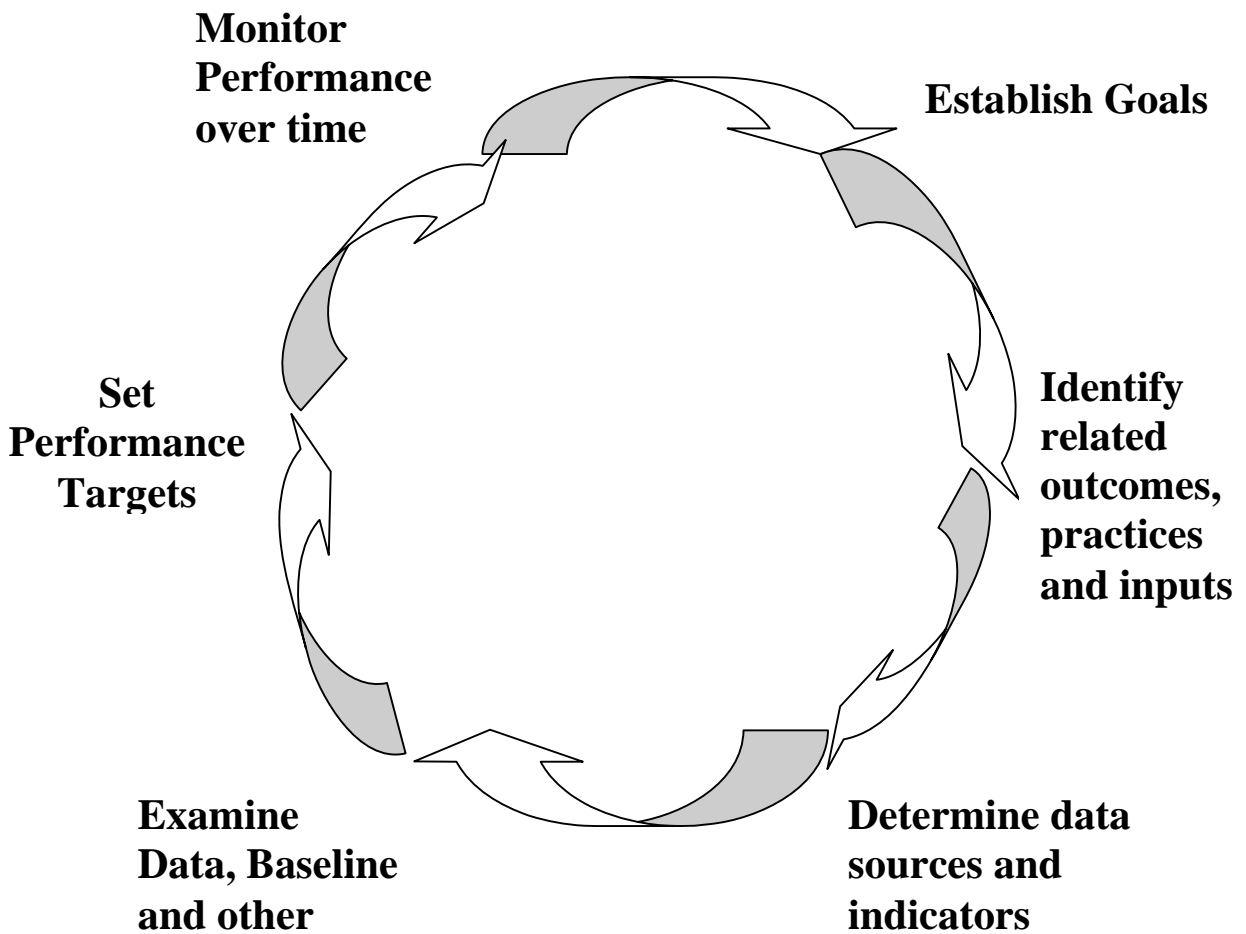
- Parents of currently enrolled students or recent graduates
- Currently enrolled CTE student or recent graduate
- Career and technical education teacher from the program area in question

- Representative from business and industry
- Labor organizations
- Other interested individuals such as government officials, nonprofit youth service providers or workforce development representatives

SYSTEM

A system is a group of interrelated components designed collectively to achieve a desired goal. Systems' thinking involves understanding how a whole is expressed in terms of its parts and conversely, how the parts relate to each other and to the whole.

6 Step Cycle



**PROGRAM PRACTICES
COMPOSITE ANALYSIS**

School: _____
Program: _____

PILLAR: Program Assessment, Information & Analysis

Item	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5
	4.	1	2	3	4	5

2.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5

3.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5

PILLAR: Strategic Planning

Item	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5
	4.	1	2	3	4	5
	5.	1	2	3	4	5
	6.	1	2	3	4	5
	7.	1	2	3	4	5

PILLAR: Staff Development

Item	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5
	4.	1	2	3	4	5
	5.	1	2	3	4	5
	6.	1	2	3	4	5

PILLAR: Contextual and Experiential Learning

Item	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5
	4.	1	2	3	4	5

2.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5
	4.	1	2	3	4	5

PILLAR: √ CTE and Academic Studies

Item	Question	1	2	3	4	5
1.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5
	4.	1	2	3	4	5

2.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5

3.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
----	----	---	---	---	---	---

4.	1.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	1	2	3	4	5

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE

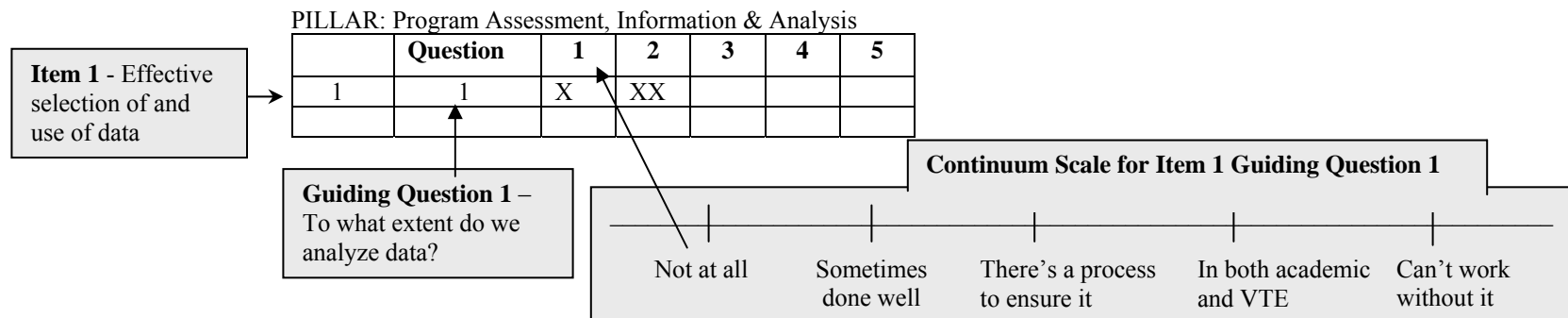
INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM PRACTICES COMPOSITE ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

It is possible to have more than one person use the Local Program Assessment Guide to assess local programs. Therefore, it may be necessary to compile the separate assessments into one. The Program Practices Composite Analysis template is one example of how separate assessments can be combined.

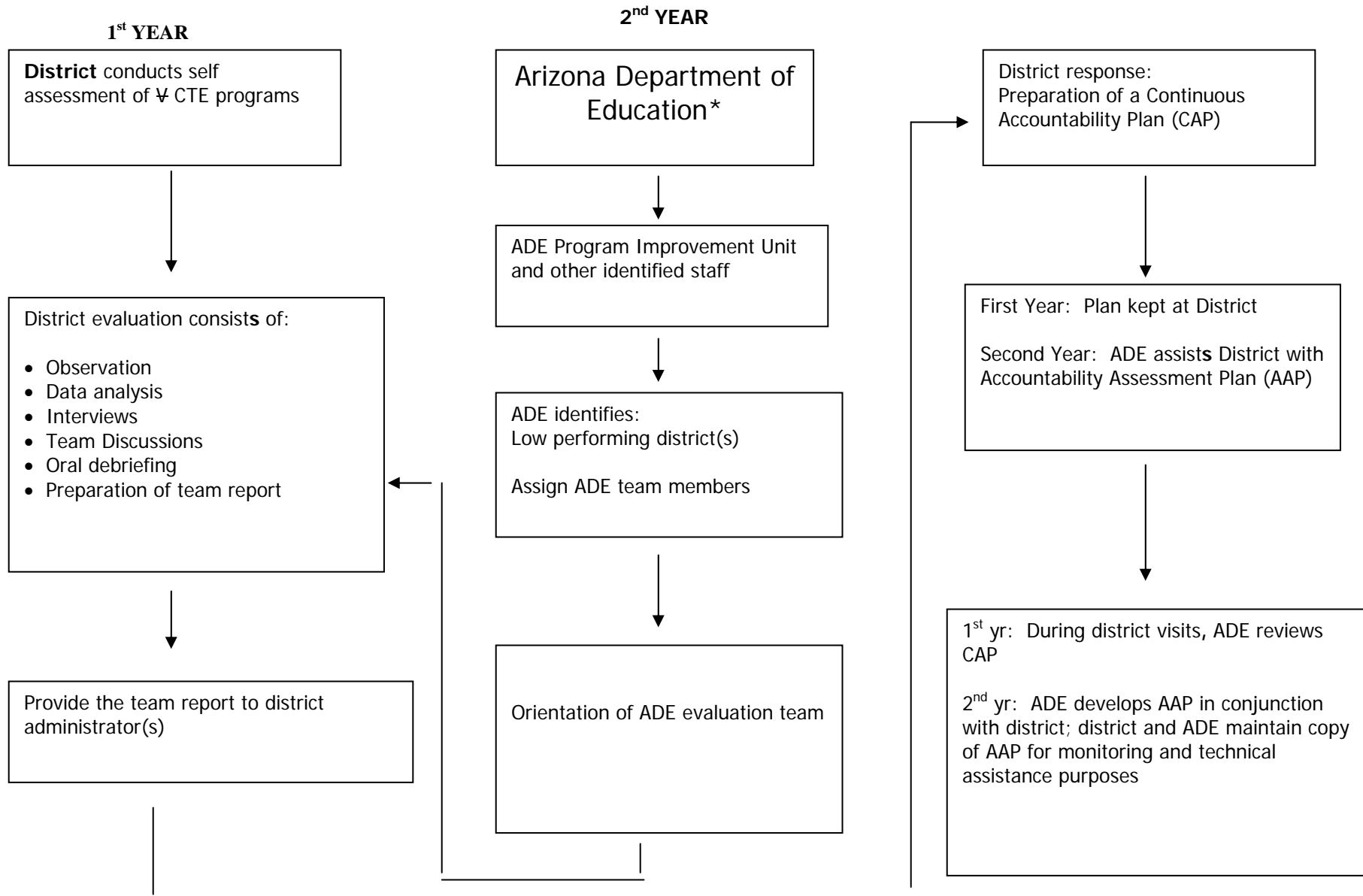
In order to get the composite information on a single page, the template abbreviates the recorded information from the Local Program Assessment Guide.

- The Pillar description heads each section.
- The actual Item descriptions and Guiding Questions are abbreviated with their identifying numbers.
- The scale of continuum for each Guiding Question is represented as the numbers 1 through 5, with the number 1 referring to the left end of the continuum scale and the number 5 to the right end of the continuum scale (considered the benchmark).
- This allows placing an X on the continuum from each separate assessment.

In this way, it is possible to see at a glance for all pillars of performance how many assessments you have and whether local practice approaches each benchmark. The gap between your local assessment marks and the benchmark at the right reveals an opportunity for improvement. Assessment marks that do not agree with one another require further discussion of the actual evidence considered in answering the Guiding Question.



FLOWCHART OF LOCAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES



*Beginning the first year, ADE conducts data analysis of districts' performance and provides technical assistance

